



Date: April 22, 2004
Contact: Gerald Moller, 605-892-7000

Event: Wild Horse and Burro Adoption

Date: May 22, 2004

Location: Belle Fourche Roundup Grounds, Belle Fourche, SD

Interested in a smart, capable horse or burro? Take home a genetic and historic remnant of the Old West for as little as \$125!

The characteristics that were important in Old West days when horses and burros were used as primary sources of travel and freight are still found in our wild horses and burros today. These characteristics are strength, endurance, and reliability. This is the reason why wild horses are becoming popular working horse and endurance prospects, and why wild burros are becoming popular pack animals for hiking enthusiasts. As a bonus, the devotion of these animals is winning hearts across the country.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is bringing approximately 40 wild horses and 10 wild burros to Belle Fourche, South Dakota. The wild horse and burro adoption will take place at the Belle Fourche Roundup Grounds (located West of Hwy 85 at the end of Roundup Street) on May 22, 2004. All animals are vaccinated, including inoculation for West Nile Virus, and Coggins tested before arriving at the adoption.

The public is encouraged to view the animals between 7 and 9 a.m., prior to bidding. All 50 animals will be offered for adoption through oral competitive bid. Registration will start at 7 a.m. and bidding will begin at 9 a.m. Starting bid will be \$125 for single horses and burros.

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Anyone interested in adopting a wild horse or burro must submit an application to BLM for approval. Adopters must be 18 years or older and have the facilities and means to care for the animal. Corrals must be constructed of wood or pipe and be at least five feet high for yearlings or at least six feet high for older horses. Persons adopting an animal must have an open style trailer, such as a stock trailer, to transport the animal they have adopted. Two-horse trailers or drop-ramp trailers will not be allowed for transport.

BLM wranglers will halter and load the adopted animals, and animals adopted must be loaded out the day of adoption.

All adopted animals remain property of the BLM for one year. During this time, the adopter must prove that he/she has provided the animal with a good home and humane treatment.

Adoption application forms can be obtained by calling or writing to the South Dakota Field Office, 310 Roundup Street, Belle Fourche, SD 57717, 605-892-7000. For further information on the adopt-a-horse program, visit the national web site at www.wildhorseandburro.blm.gov, and also check out the South Dakota Field Office web site at www.mt.blm.gov/sdfo/index.html.

The Adopt-A-Horse or Burro Program began in 1976 in an effort to control the increasing population of wild horses and burros on federal lands. These animals are descendants of horses and burros that were released or escaped from Spanish explorers, soldiers, ranchers, and Native Americans. They are protected under the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971 as "...living symbols of the historic and pioneer spirit of the West." Since the animals are protected and have few natural predators, their numbers have increased significantly through the years. They are gathered from the rangelands not only to ensure their survival but to keep the rangelands healthy for the remaining wild horses and burros, native wildlife, and permitted livestock.